

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COTONO 00359 170828Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 FBO-02 A-01 OPR-02 /017 W
-----170851Z 074806 /13

R 170750Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9405

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0359

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP US DM
SUBJ: BENIN COUP ATTEMPT-DAMAGE TO USG PROPERTY

REF: STATE 34966

1. THE FOLLOWING USG SHORT-TERM LEASED PROPERTIES WERE DAMAGED
ON JANUARY 16, 1977:

A. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE: APPROXIMATELY 100 ROUNDS OF
SMALL ARMS FIRE BROKE WINDOWS AND DAMAGED INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR
WALLS. REPAIR COST FOR MASONRY ESTIMATED AT \$100 US. REPLACE-
MENT COST OF GLASS CANNOT BE ESTIMATED AT THIS TIME BECAUSE
MATERIALS MUST BE IMPORTED AND LOCAL FIRM HAS BEEN UNABLE TO
GIVE QUOTES TO DATE. PERHAPS \$1000 US. ONE CHAIR IN LIVING AREA
WAS DAMAGED, REPLACEMENT COST \$100 US. ONE BED HEADBOARD WAS
DAMAGED, REPAIR COST \$10 US.

B. CONSUL'S RESIDENCE TOOK RIFLE GRENADES ON THE OUTSIDE
WALL. REPAIRS WILL BE MADE DURING ROUTINE REPAINTING AT OWNER'S
EXPENSE.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RESIDENCE DAMAGED BY RIFLE
GRENADES. THIRTY-THREE HOLES IN HOUSE WILL BE REPAIRED DURING
ROUTINE REPAINTING BY LANDLORD; MASONRY DAMAGE TO GARAGE WILL
ALSO BE REPAIRED BY LANDLORD AT MINIMAL EXPENSE. POST HAS
REPLACED 12 BROKEN WINDOW SLATS AT COST TO USG OF \$25 US.

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ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY MERCENARY SOLDIER WAS
ANYWHERE IN THE AREA AT THE TIME OF THE SHOOTING, WHOLE QUESTION
OF THE NUMBER OF MERCENARIES INVOLVED IN COUP ATTEMPT AND THEIR
LOCATION IS UNSETTLED AND NOT LIKELY TO BE RESOLVED IN USG
FAVOR. BENINESE LOCAL REPORTED THAT DAMAGE TO ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER'S HOUSE WAS DONE BY GPRB SOLDIERS SHOOTING AT OTHER GPRB
SOLDIERS. POST SUSPECTS SAME SITUATION RESULTED IN DAMAGE

TO NEARBY CONSUL'S HOUSE.

3. ENGINEERS FROM GPRB'S COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TOLD POST'S ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER THAT GPRB WOULD PAY FOR ALL DAMAGES RESULTING FROM COUP ATTEMPT. NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS ON THIS MATTER, HOWEVER, SINCE MUCH WILL DEPEND ON REPORT OF UN INVESTIGATING COMMISSION WHICH ARRIVES FEBRUARY 16.

4. THE OWNER OF THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE IS THE GPRB. THUS, ONE WAU OR ANOTHER, GPRB WOULD SEEM TO BE STUCK FOR REPAIRS TO THE RESIDENCE. SINCE THE QUESTIONS OF CONTRACT AND BACK RENT HAVE NEVER BEEN SETTLED, POST PROPOSES THAT REPAIRS BE INITIATED WITH OBLIGATIONS AGAINST RENT OWED TO GPRB. A NOTE ADVISING OF POST'S INTENTION OF REPAIRING DAMAGE AND SUBTRACTING COST FROM RENT COULD BE SENT TO MFA. IF GPRB OBJECTED, POST WOULD REQUEST GPRB, AS LANDLORD, REPAIR DAMAGE.

5. DAMAGE TO USG PERSONAL PROPERTY (PARA 1A ABOVE)
PROBABLY TOO SMALL TO MAKE CLAIM WORTHWHILE.

6. COMMENT: QUESTION OF REPAIR RESPONSIBILITY WILL PROBABLY REOPEN ISSUE OF (A) NEW CONTRACT FOR RESIDENCE; (B) DURATION OF CONTRACT IN LIGHT OF USG UNDERTAKING TO BUILD NEW CHANCERY/ RESIDENCE COMPLEX, (C) SPECIFIC STEPS TAKEN TO DATE BY USG TO MEET COMMITMENT TO BUILD NEW COMPLEX BY 1981. SUGGEST WE HAVE NECESSARY INFORMATION IN HAND BEFORE BRINGING UP MATTER TO BENINESE. THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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